



Denise Juneau, Superintendent
Montana Office of Public Instruction
www.opi.mt.gov

Summer Food Service Program Appeal Procedure

Keep this procedure for your records. You agree to abide by this procedure when you sign the Summer Food Service Program Agreement/Renewal with the Office of Public Instruction.

A. Actions Which Can Be Appealed

In accordance with 7 CFR 225.13, a sponsoring organization or a food service management company may appeal, by requesting a review, the following actions made by the Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Programs, hereinafter referred to as the State Agency:

1. Denial of an organization's application for participation;
2. Denial of an application submitted by a sponsoring organization for a site;
3. Termination of the participation of a sponsor or a site;
4. Denial of an advance payment;
5. Denial of all or a part of a claim for reimbursement (except for late submission under 225.9 (d)(5));
6. Demand for the remittance of a payment;
7. Refusal by the State Agency to forward to FNS an exception request by the sponsor for payment of a late claim or a request for an upward adjustment to a claim;
8. Denial of a food service management company's application for registration; or
9. Revocation of a food service management company's registration.

B. State Agency Responsibilities

The sponsor or food service management company shall be advised in writing of the grounds upon which the State Agency based the action. The notice of action, which shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, shall also include a statement indicating that the sponsor or food service management company has the right to appeal the action of the State Agency.

C. Filing an Appeal

1. The appellant shall have an opportunity to review any information upon which the action was based.
2. The appellant may refute the charges contained in the notice of action either in person or by filing written documentation with the review official. To be considered, written documentation must be submitted by the appellant within seven (7) days of submitting the request for review, must clearly identify the State Agency action being appealed, and must include a photocopy of the notice of action issued by the State Agency.
3. The appeal request must state whether the appellant desires the hearing office to review records only or if the appellant desires a hearing before the hearing officer.
4. The request for review must be postmarked no later than two weeks from the date of receipt of the notice of action.

5. Mail the request to the Assistant Superintendent for the Department of Education Services, Office of Public Instruction, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620.
6. The appellant may retain legal counsel or may be represented by another person.

D. Procedures for Handling Review

1. A hearing shall be held by the review official in addition to, or in lieu of, a review of written information submitted by the appellant only if the appellant so specifies in the letter of request for review.
2. Failure of the appellant's representative to appear at a scheduled hearing shall constitute the appellant's waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the review official, unless the review official agrees to reschedule the hearing.
3. A representative of the State Agency shall be allowed to attend the hearing to respond to the appellant's testimony and written information and to answer questions from the review official.
4. If the appellant has requested a hearing, the appellant and the State Agency shall be provided with at least (5) days advance written notice, sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, of the time and place of the hearing.
5. The hearing shall be held within fourteen (14) days of the date of the receipt of the request for review, but, where applicable, not before the appellant's written documentation is received in accordance with paragraphs C (2) and D (1-3).
6. The review official shall be independent of the original decision making process.
7. A record regarding each review shall be kept by the State Agency for a period of three years following the date of the final determination of the appeal. The record shall document the State Agency's compliance with these regulations and shall include the basis for the decision.

E. Determination of the Review Officer

1. The review official shall make a determination based on information provided by the State Agency and the appellant, and on Summer Food Service Program regulations.
2. Within five (5) working days after the appellant's hearing, or within five (5) working days after receipt of written documentation if no hearing is held, the reviewing official must make a determination based on a full review of the administrative record and inform the appellant of the determination of the review by certified mail, return receipt requested.
3. The determination by the state review official is the final administrative determination to be afforded to the appellant.

F. Procedure Prior to Review

The State Agency's action shall remain in effect during the appeal process. However, participating sponsors and sites may continue operating under the Summer Food Service Program during an appeal of termination, and if the appeal results in overturning the State Agency's decision, reimbursement shall be paid for meals served during the appeal process. Such continued operation under the Program shall not be allowed if the State Agency's action is based on imminent dangers to the health or welfare of children. If the sponsor or site has been terminated for this reason, the State Agency shall so specify in its notice of action.